

The ABPI Code of Practice for the Pharmaceutical Industry sets standards for the promotion of medicines for prescribing to health professionals and the provision of information to the public about prescription only medicines. Publicity is the main sanction when breaches of the Code are ruled. The latest case ruled in breach of Clause 2 of the Code (a sign of particular censure is highlighted below).

Novartis Pharmaceuticals UK Limited has breached the ABPI Code of Practice for the Pharmaceutical Industry and brought discredit upon, and reduced confidence in, the pharmaceutical industry.

Novartis Pharmaceuticals UK Limited – Case AUTH/3861/12/23

For the cumulative effect of incorrectly using the EMA SPC, circulation of a disguised promotional email, by a third-party medical publisher, in November 2023 and failures of the company's internal governance processes, Novartis was ruled in breach of the following clauses of the 2021 Code:

- Clause 2** - Bringing discredit upon, and reducing confidence in, the pharmaceutical industry
- Clause 5.1** - Failing to maintain high standards
- Clause 5.5** - Failing to be sufficiently clear as to the company's role and involvement
- Clause 11.2** -Promoting a medicine for an unlicensed indication
- Clause 12.1** -Failing to include up-to-date prescribing information
- Clause 12.10** -Failing to include a black triangle adjacent to the first mention of the product in digital material
- Clause 15.6** - Disguising promotional material

The case report is available at www.pmcpa.org.uk.

The Prescription Medicines Code of Practice Authority (PMCPA) was established by The Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI) to operate the ABPI Code of Practice for the Pharmaceutical Industry independently of the ABPI. The PMCPA is a division of the ABPI. The Code covers the promotion of medicines for prescribing to health professionals and the provision of information to the public about prescription only medicines.

If you have any concerns about the activities of pharmaceutical companies in this regard, please contact the PMCPA at 2nd Floor, Goldings House, Hay's Galleria, 2 Hay's Lane, London, SE1 2HB, email: complaints@pmcpa.org.uk, or visit www.pmcpa.org.uk/complaints-procedure/make-a-complaint.

The Code and other information, including details about ongoing cases, can be found on the PMCPA website: www.pmcpa.org.uk.